

19 June 1951

SUBJECT: Operating Procedure for Vital Materials Program

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1. PURPOSE: The purpose of this procedure is to institute a program for the orderly deposit of all vital materials, such as documents, records, and equipment pertinent to the activities of the organizational components of CIA, in a repository for safe keeping.

2. DEFINITIONS:

- a. Vital Materials - Vital materials are those specific items in the possession of CIA which are essential to the agency on a continuing basis and which, in the event of destruction, would constitute an irreplaceable loss.
- b. Area Records Officer - An Area Records Officer is an individual designated by an office head to act in all matters pertaining to vital materials within his jurisdiction.
- c. CIA Vital Materials Officer - The CIA Vital Materials Officer is the Chief, Records Management and Distribution Branch, General Services Division, Administrative Services. He is designated to coordinate the vital materials program for the entire agency.
- d. The Repository - The repository is a place where vital materials are being stored for safe keeping.
- e. Custodian of the Repository - The Custodian of the Repository (hereinafter referred to as the Custodian) is an individual designated to administer the functions of the Repository.
- f. Office of Origin - An "Office of Origin" is an office holding custodial jurisdiction over certain vital materials which, pursuant to the purpose of this program, should be moved to a place of safe keeping.

3. CATEGORIES OF VITAL MATERIALS: Charts 1, 2 and 3, Appendix A comprise a tabulation of the categories of vital materials by office of origin. Adherence to an organizational and functional listing of vital materials is essential to an overall agency records control program and, also, to preclude unnecessary duplication in reproduction requirements.

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4. OBJECTIVES:

- a. Safe storage of vital materials in original or reproduced form in a repository on a timely basis.
- b. Maintenance of the quality of film, legibility of images and continuity of indices with respect to reproduced materials.
- c. Security for the physical transfer of vital materials to the repository.
- d. The systematic filing and storage of vital materials to provide for appropriate reference coding and essential inventory purposes.
- e. The disposition of those vital materials which become non-record or non-current for reference purposes.
- f. The submission of periodic inventory reports to Offices of Origin by the Custodian.

5. DEPOSIT SYSTEM: The deposit of vital materials in original form will be construed as a direct method of effecting storage. The deposit thereof in reproduced form, such as by use of microphotography, will be construed as an indirect method.

a. Requirements -

- (1) Scheduling the flow of vital materials to the repository.
- (2) Scheduling reproduction operations.
- (3) Completing the physical transfer of the materials under secure circumstances.

b. Deposit Schedule - Effective 25 June 1951, deposits of vital materials will be made in the repository on Friday of each week. The CIA Vital Materials Officer will arrange for transportation, security, and other essential details.

c. Visits to Repository - An Area Records Officer making a direct deposit may accompany the CIA Vital Materials Officer to the repository.

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- d. Weekly Report - The CIA Vital Materials Officer will compile Report Form ____ "Vital Materials Placed in Repository" for rendition each week to the Chief, Administrative Services. This report will reflect in a composite manner the deposit activity for each Office of Origin on a cumulative basis. An office having no vital materials for deposit within a single week will advise the CIA Vital Materials Officer before Friday of each week.
6. FUNCTIONS: The operating elements will perform the following functions, respectively:
- a. Area Records Officer - The Officer will:
 - (1) Select, prepare, and identify vital materials as authorized for transfer directly from the office of origin to the repository.
 - (2) Select, prepare, and identify vital materials pursuant to predetermined schedules for transfer indirectly from the office of origin through the CIA Vital Materials Officer to the repository.
 - (3) Prepare and initiate CIA Form No. ____ "Transfer Slip", as appropriate.
 - (4) Hold vital materials to be transferred in suspense file pending date of scheduled deposit.
 - (5) Accompany CIA Vital Materials Officer to the repository on dates of scheduled deposits, as appropriate, to make physical deposits of vital materials.
 - (6) Bring to the attention of the Assistant Director or Chief any changes in the inventory that have occurred since the previous quarterly report.
 - (7) Consult with the CIA Vital Materials Officer on a continuing basis on matters pertaining to vital materials under his jurisdiction.
 - (8) Initiate, execute and process forms, certificates, and reports either as prescribed herein or as requested by the CIA Vital Materials Officer.

- b. CIA Vital Materials Officer - The Officer will advise and assist Area Records Officers on a continuing basis on matters pertaining to vital materials and will coordinate the Vital Materials Program on an operating basis by preparing and furnishing schedules, and completing arrangements for the physical transfer of vital materials directly or indirectly from Offices of Origin to the Repository; also, by:
- (1) Verifying the schedules to insure that offices are forwarding vital materials on a continuing basis.
 - (2) Duplicating vital materials where original copies cannot be deposited, and establishing schedules therefor.
 - (3) Inspecting quality of duplicating processes used for vital materials.
 - (4) Completing CIA Form No. ____ "Transfer Slip", as appropriate.
 - (5) Making scheduled visits to the Repository for the deposit of vital materials.
 - (6) Maintaining control file of receipts for duplicated vital materials signed by the Custodian upon deposit in the Repository.
 - (7) Procuring of personnel and equipment essential to implement the vital materials program with respect to indirect deposits.

c. Custodian - The Custodian Will:

- (1) Receive, verify and receipt for vital materials deposited through the CIA Vital Materials Officer.
- (2) Complete CIA Form No. ____ "Transfer Slip", as appropriate.
- (3) Establish and maintain an appropriate reference system that will provide broad codification to facilitate access to vital materials.
- (4) Prepare and furnish periodic inventory reports to the several Offices of Origin.
- (5) Complete destruction or return of vital materials to Offices of Origin, as directed.

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7. CONTROL OF VITAL MATERIALS -- The following procedure is prescribed for the control of Vital Material:

- a. Transfer Slip - CIA Form No. _____ "Transfer Slip" (See Appendix B) has been devised as a basic means of establishing administrative control over vital materials flowing to the repository by both direct and indirect methods of deposit. This is a four-part manifold form which provides for the recording of specific control data by each of the three operating elements, respectively, as follows:
 - (1) The Area Records Officer -- The Officer will initiate the form, recording in the spaces provided essential identifying data such as office of origin, date, deposit number, description of material, date and number of pages, and also the deposit method, retention period and replacement data.
 - (2) Vital Materials Officer -- The Officer will complete the spaces provided for reproduction data such as reel number, frame number, date and also, record the transfer date and any special instructions.
 - (3) The Custodian -- The Custodian will complete the spaces provided for the storage numbers i. e. cabinet and drawer and, subsequently, the disposition dates for either the destruction or return of the vital materials to the Office of Origin.
- b. Deposit Numbers -- Each Area Records Officer will maintain a separate series of deposit numbers in numerical sequence.
- c. Distribution of Copies -- Each copy of the form reflects the required distribution and, thus, is self-explanatory. Each Area Records Officer will maintain a control file of copies Numbered 1 and 3. Copy Number 1 will be placed in the control file before the vital materials are moved to the repository. Copy Number 2 will be fastened securely to the material and remain therewith while in storage. Copies Numbered 3 and 4 will be taken to the repository by the Area Records Officer where the Custodian, after executing the receipt (Copy Number 3), for indirect deposits, will place copy Number 4 in his control file. The foregoing will apply to both direct and indirect methods of deposit except that in the case of indirect deposits, the Area Records Officer will not separate the copies of the form for distribution until after reproduction operations have been completed.

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- d. Receipt -- The Custodian will execute the receipts for indirect deposits. However, as he will have no knowledge of the contents of direct deposits he will not be required to receipt therefor nor compile reports of possession thereon.

8. IDENTIFICATION OF VITAL MATERIALS -- The identification of vital materials is prescribed as follows:

- a. Title page -- All materials recommended for storage as vital will reflect the Office of Origin, the long and short title and serial number which will conform with the file series established for each office respectively, as provided in Appendix B. The word "vital" will appear on the outside cover of all materials. Where the material concerns a document, as such, the data prescribed above will appear on the title page (inside front cover), and each succeeding volume of a multi-volume document will bear a separate short title. Where the materials entail records only, the subject matter of each group in the records series will be substituted for the "title" as appropriate. Where the material comprises equipment, the name, make and model number will suffice for the "title".
- b. Correspondence and Reports -- All references to vital materials in possession, inventory or transfer, such as reports, reports of destruction, or correspondence will be by serial number, date and short title only. In using a short title every symbol of the short title will be included. Any correspondence on paper which refers to vital materials by titles other than the short titles will be assigned a minimum security classification of SECRET, i. e., if the reference discloses that the material is vital.
- c. Revision of Vital Materials -- A revised edition of existing vital materials may be assigned a new short title but, where this is undesirable, the old short title followed by a symbol which will differentiate the revised edition from the old is permissible.
- d. Reproduction -- Reproduction of vital materials in whole or part is forbidden except by specific authorization of the office of origin. When authorized, a reproduction will show the reproducing office, authority for such reproduction, and the number of copies reproduced. In addition the Office of Origin will be notified.

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- e. Transfer of Vital Materials -- When vital materials are transferred from one Office of Origin to another, or the organization's designation changes, a certificate of transfer will be made in triplicate by the assignee or the successor organization. The certificate will be signed by the Area Records Officer transferring the material. The original and one copy will be forwarded to the CIA Vital Materials Officer who in turn will forward both copies to the Custodian of the Repository for receipt and acknowledgement. A copy of the certificate of transfer will be retained by each office concerned.
- f. Destruction of Vital Materials -- Normally, the Office of Origin will designate when vital materials are to be removed from the Repository and destroyed. The Custodian will be responsible for the disposition of vital materials which are to be destroyed at the Repository. In this responsibility, he will adhere to CIA Security Regulations covering the destruction of classified material. A copy of the certificate of destruction will be forwarded to the Office of Origin and to the CIA Vital Materials Officer for record.

9. INVENTORY OF VITAL MATERIALS --

- a. The Custodian will maintain a master inventory of all vital material by Office of Origin and will make, or have made, each quarter of every year, an accurate return thereof to each office concerned, respectively.
- b. In making the quarterly report of possession the following details will be observed:
 - (1) Each item will be physically inspected and its serial deposit number checked with the inventory.
 - (2) The Custodian of the Repository will take the inventory and will sign the report.
- c. A quarterly report of possession will not be required for:
 - (1) Vital Materials which have been received, subsequently destroyed, and a destruction report rendered thereon within a single quarterly period.
 - (2) Materials which have been placed in the Repository for historical purposes only, with the express approval of the Custodian.
 - (3) Materials which have been received by direct deposit.

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10. SECURITY -- Classified vital materials will be transmitted in accordance with paragraph 29 of CIA Security Regulations.
- a. Transmission of Vital Materials -- The transmission of vital materials will be effected by direct contact wherever practicable. Responsible officers of the three operating elements will provide security of transmission from one to another. Vital materials enroute to the Repository will be protected by an armed courier, as necessary.
 - b. Storage of Vital Materials -- Vital materials will be stored in three way combination safes when in possession of any of the three operating elements i. e. where not in transit or other process. Safes containing vital materials will be kept locked with full combinations whenever they are not under the direct supervision of the officials intrusted with the combinations, respectively.
 - (1) Cryptographic Documents -- Cryptographic documents, so far as practicable, cipher tables, alphabets and keys will not be kept in the same safe as classified code books, documents and devices to which they apply.
 - c. Access to Safes -- In addition to the Custodian the only officials authorized to have access to the vaults and to have the combinations, keys and access to the safes housing vital materials at the Repository are designated as follows:
 - (1) The CIA Vital Materials Officer
 - (2) The Area Records Officer of Interest

NOTE: Appendix A is in course of preparation and will be published upon completion.

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"CHECK LIST" FOR REVIEWING VITAL MATERIALS

1. Are all materials considered Vital to your Office on deposit? _____
2. Are the VITAL MATERIALS current? _____
3. Has obsolete material been withdrawn? _____
4. Could the Vital Materials on deposit be put into two groups?
 - a. Those materials needed for immediate use. _____
 - b. Those materials that would not be needed for immediate use but would be used to reconstitute the Agency? _____
5. In the event it is necessary to evacuate from present relocation what records would be considered indispensable and would require moving? Consider available, to accomplish this move, only personnel and vehicles assigned to your office at relocation.
6. Are the punched card deposits presently on file in repository arranged in the most readily available form to provide the required listings? _____
7. Are there on file in repository current punch card machine operating procedures and boards wired for ready use? _____
8. Is it feasible to replace certain present punched card deposits with listings? _____
9. Are there listings that should be replaced with punched cards to provide more flexibility? _____
10. Do the reels of microfilm include adequate indexing? _____
11. How many frames of microfilm would require prints in the initial emergency period? _____
12. How many frames of microfilm would require prints for reconstruction? _____
13. Are the current Vital Materials deposit schedules complete? _____
14. Are you depositing any of the following:
 - a. Official Personnel Records? _____
 - b. Official Fiscal, Finance and Budget Records? _____
 - c. Official Security Records? _____
 - d. Official Training Records? _____
 - e. Official Medical Records? _____

It is not necessary for you to deposit the above as they are placed in the Repository by the respective office creating the document.